# FA59 COLs Board Analysis

Grant Doty
MAJ, 59
Assignment Officer

04 December 2003

**Disclaimer:** This information is a summary of the results of the FY 03 COL promotion board. Any trends indicated are simply observations based on the results of the board for the ISCF officers selected. It is important to note that the data below does not reflect institutionalized requirements for promotion but a reflection of dynamics of the FY 03 COL board results.

# Bottom Line…wow*!!*

With the exception of one very small functional area (2 officers in the zone and two selected), FA59 had the highest selection rate of every branch in the Army*!* We had 6 of 8 in the zone selected (75%) + our first ever BZ select! This is an incredible 87.5% DOPMAA select rate. This is higher than DOPMA rates to even LTC and this is to COL! Wow. Additionally, this is the first year (out of three OPMS21/3) COLs boards that we had no minimum select rate.

The analysis is relatively straight fwd and is "relatively" consistent with what I've been saying all along… with one apparent caveat (again which I will discuss shortly).

Here are our selectees:

- Craig Bollenberg
- Thomas Bryant (now retired… ugh)
- John Hendrick
- Chris King
- Dan Klippstein
- John Nelson (BZ)
- Steven Townsend

Congrats to all.

# Promotion/Selection Background

## General Info

- As I said after the last board, OPMS3 (the system previously know as OPMSXXI) seems to be working well. Promotion rates are supposed to be comparable between career fields (i.e., Operations, IO, OS, and IS)...
  - The reason the Army does not commit to comparability between actual functional areas and branches (e.g., between 59s and IN or AR) is that with such small numbers the former could be easily skewed with one additional or one less selection.
- Promotion “comparison” rates are based on DOPMA averages. This is calculated by dividing the total number of officers selected for promotion in all zones (PZ, AZ, and BZ) by the number of officers in the PZ (YG82).

**See next two slides for DOPMA numbers**

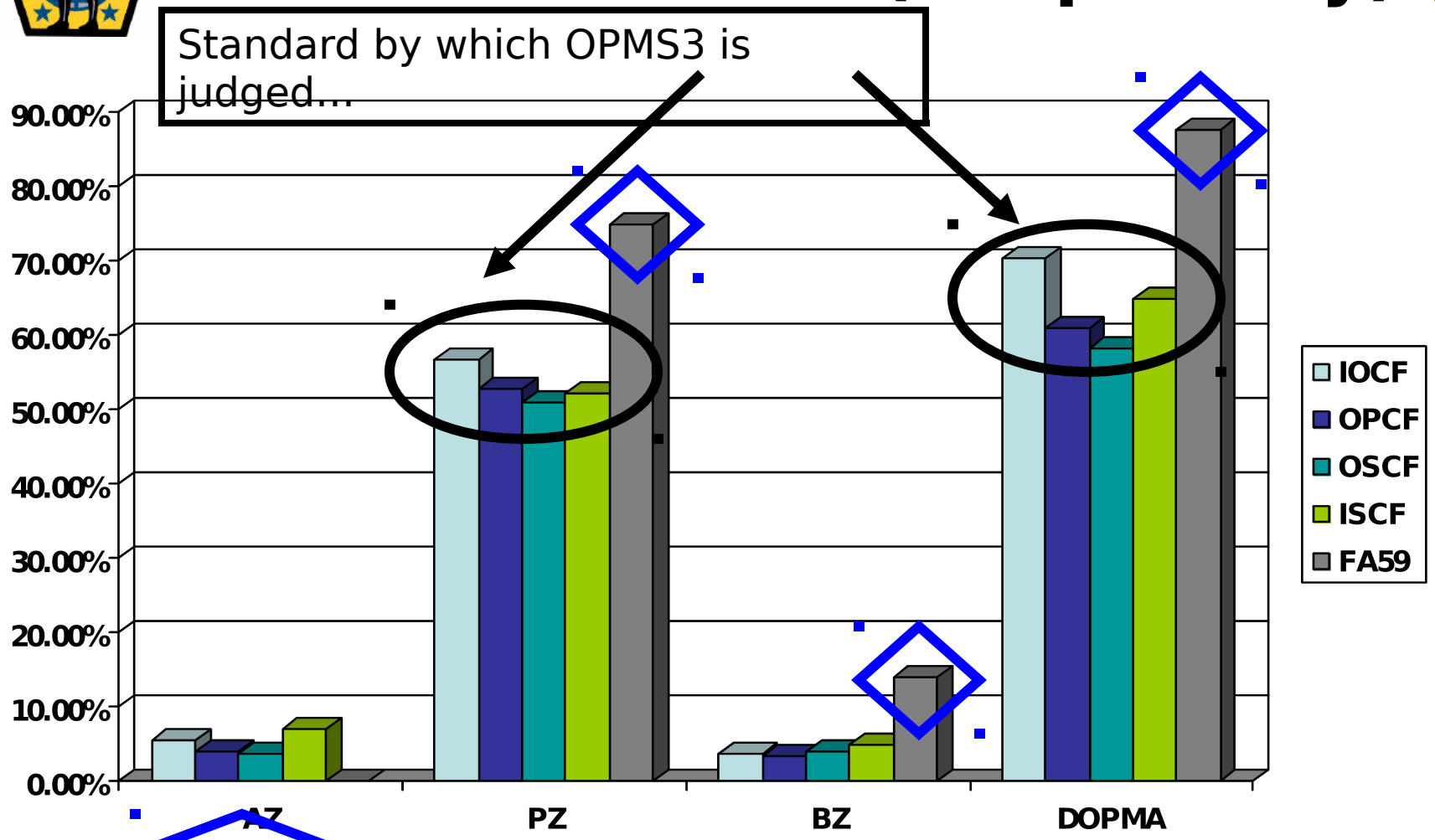
# Promotion Rates

| | AZ | PZ | BZ | DOPMA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IOCF** | 5.60% | 56.80% | 3.60% | 70.30% |
| **OPCF** | 3.90% | 52.60% | 3.20% | 60.90% |
| **OSCF** | 3.70% | 51.00% | 3.80% | 58.30% |
| **ISCF** | 7.10% | 52.10% | 4.80% | 64.80% |
| **FA59** | **0.00%** | **75.00%** | **14.00%** | **87.50%** |

**As this illustrates, the Army is keeping its [promise*] that selection will be comparable across all fields! This is a good news story.**

*It's NOT a promise really… it is a goal…

# Promotion Rates (Graphically)




Great numbers for 59... this year, but the fact remains we are a low-density FA and therefore these can and will fluctuate from year to year around the average (last year we had 46% DOPMA average with a minimum promote number of six)

# Promotion Selection Background
## General Info (Continued)

- ISCF (which includes 43, 45, 47, 49, 50, 52, and 59s) had a the following stated goals and objectives:
  - Minimum Selection Reqts: 11 (vs. 19 last year); the minimums were 4@45; 2@47; 5@50.
  - Optimum Selection Goal: 41 (vs. 42 last year)
  - Maximum Selection Goal: 46 (vs. 47 last year)
- ISCF had 46 officers (the “maximum”) actually selected.
  - 37 officers were selected PZ (52.1%)
  - 6 officers were selected AZ (7.1%)
  - 3 officers were selected BZ (4.8%)
- The total ISCF officers “considered” were:
  - 84 AZ considered (NOTE: The board files are not marked “AZ;” PZ and AZ files are considered simple “in the zone;”
  - 71 PZ considered,
  - 62 BZ considered (NOTE: The board files are marked “BZ”)

# Promotion Selection Background
## FA59 Specific

- FA 59 had a no minimum promote requirement*!*
- Last year we had to promote six (the highest minimum within ISCF) and we promoted six; As I commented last year, “without this minimum we would NOT have had some officers, who were selected, selected;”
- The reason we did not have the minimum makes sense. Unlike last year when we had only 21 @ O-6s and had auths for 26… This year, we have a total of 27 @ O-6s and with 27 auths → no shortage, no min.
- The fact that we promoted seven officers, which would have brought us to 34 @ O-6s (if one of the selectees had not retired), with no comparable gain in auths, is a function of “at large” promotions. Specifically, after all the ISCF minimums are promoted (recall ISCF had 11 in 3 functional areas) then the remainder of the officers (between the 41 min/46 max) can and do get selected “at large” based on file strength (i.e., 30-35 ISCF officers could be selected “at large.”) FA59 had seven*!*

# Promotion Selection Background
## FA59 Specific Trends

The next few slide articulate what I provided my boss when asked to give an analysis on the results:

- Overall Trends For Those Selected in the Primary Zone:
  - The result of this board are surprising for a three reasons:
    - First and most significantly, we had a remarkable 75% PZ promotion rate (highest in ISCF and compared to all career fields/branches, only behind FA57s who had 2 of 2 selected);
    - Second, it is the first year under OPMS3 that we did not have a minimum promote rate (in 2001 we had to promote 4 and promoted 4; in 2002 we had to promote 6 and promoted 6);
    - Third, we had our first OPMS3 FA59 BZ select*!*

# Promotion Selection Background
## FA59 Specific Trends (Continued)

"Strength of file" defined by % ACOMs remains the most significant "likely" determinant. The 63% ACOMs the average selectee earned is lower than last year (was 67%). Three of the six officers selected had the "strongest" files by this analysis (80%, 75%, and 67% ACOMs)/Tier One*. Two of the remaining three had 60% ACOMs/Tier Two*. One officer seems to be a significant outlier (only 40% ACOMs)/Tier Three*. In fact, without this one officer, the average ACOMs of those selected would have been about what I would have expected: 68%.

***NOTE: My division of the selected population into "tiers" based on %ACOMs is simply to assist in articulating why some may have been selected and others may not (see subsequent slides).**

# Promotion Selection Background
## FA59 Specific Trends (Continued)

- Explaining why the two officers (in what I call Tier Two/ with 60% ACOMs) were distinguished from PZ and AZ non-selectees in the same "Tier" seems to be a factor of two things:
  - First, all officers in this tier who had SSC (or SSC Selectee) annotated on their ORB were selected. Those that did not were not. NOTE: One officer who had completed SSC (non-res) but did not have a strong file (only 28% ACOM) was not selected. This confirms the view that "strength of file" defined by % ACOMs is the most significant factor.
    - Prior to the board I had two PZ officers who were eligible to sign up for the distance learning SSC but had not done so. Because simply signing up would result in an annotation on their ORB: "MEL3," I called both and highly encouraged them to sign up to "distinguish" their files from the masses of simple MEL4. While they hesitated both ultimately acquiesced and I am pleased to say that both were selected for O6. This is an important lesson.
    - This conclusion regarding the apparent importance of SSC/SSC Select being annotated on the ORB (which will be made even clearer when I discuss Tier Three) would seem to detract from my (previously?) boundless faith in simple %ACOM analysis.

# Promotion Selection Background
## FA59 Specific Trends (Continued)

- A second possible explanation why the two officers (in what I call Tier Two/ with 60% ACOMs) were distinguished from PZ and AZ non-selectees in the same "Tier" is CFD timing.
  - All those selected had CFD'd with their YG's cohort (PZ in October 2000).
    - Keep in mind that YG 82/PZ officers pinned-on LTC in 1998.
  - None of the PZ/AZ officers that recently transferred (one with a good file became a 59 in late 2002 and another with a good file in early 2003).
    - It seems possible that the board saw them as late transfers who were possibly just trying to get promoted (even though they had 59 time or 59-like time - e.g., SAMS grads with SAMS utilization tours);
    - This is a "good news" story for those (who CFD due course) who are concerned that officers might try to stay with their basic branch to test the waters for BN Command given "strong" files and then when not selected, transfer over to a non-OPCF to try their luck there. This seems to also detract from my %ACOM analysis.

# Promotion Selection Background
## FA59 Specific Trends (Continued)

- I have no logical explanation why the one officer with only 40% ACOMs (Third Tier) was selected. Keep in mind that we had no minimum promote numbers (as we did in 2001 and 2002). This officer had, however, completed non-res SSC and this was on his ORB (once SSC is complete it simple says SSC Grad/MEL1).
  - Again, this would seem to detract from my previous "faith" in % ACOM analyses (see previous board analyses).
    - While stepping away from a % ACOM analysis might bring comfort to those who complain that this is mechanistic, I am frankly less confident that a process that simply selects SSC grads/SSC selects is better.
      - NOTE: As I mentioned earlier "One officer who had completed SSC (non-res) but did not have a strong file (only 28% ACOM) was not selected." This confirms the view that "strength of file" still matters, but for this board is it is not clear how much.
        - » Given all this info, one could theoretically make a template that says all officers with both 1) SSC (or SSC Select) on their ORBs; and 2) with 40% ACOM… got selected. Those that did not have both 1) and 2) were not selected. Of course it is not this simplistic, but nor was my simple %ACOM analyses.

# Promotion Selection Background
## FA59 Specific Trends (Continued)

- **Misc. Issues/non-factors:**
  - **All selectees had 24 months or more in a 59 psn. Five of the six had over 36 months. This is not noticeably different than non-selectees and therefore appears to be non-issue. The main factors are strength of file - % ACOM and SSC selection.**
  - **Three (of 7) selectees had joint time; and five (of 7) had ARSTAF time; however, the two PZ non-selects had joint experience. Therefore, this seems to be a non-issue.**

# Strength of File (%ACOM) Caveat

- As I say on every analysis, clearly the board does NOT do a simple mathematical equation re: top-block OERs. I know this. More things are considered (e.g., performance in BQ jobs, MEL4/1, joint/ ARSTAF time, more recent reports, ranks of SRs, pictures/read: fat, advanced degree, etc. etc.)...
- However, this "strength of file" analysis is a decent proxy with which one can rank an officer's relation to others. All my board analyses suggest this factor explains most selections/non-selections.

# SSC Caveat

- As my analysis suggests, at least for this board, SSC (or selection) annotated on the ORB seems to have mattered.
- After past boards, I minimized this factor given there is a direct positive correlation between performance as measured by % ACOMs and selection for SSC (i.e., good officers with good files get selected for SSC and those same good files are "voted" shortly afterwards in the O-6 board…not surprisingly, what the SSC board liked, the COLs board liked as well).
  - Given (as my SSC analysis) notes that only 7% of officers get selected for SSC (resident) during any board and promotion rate to COL is approx 50% it is not surprising that those selected for SSC get COL.
- My previous analyses (minimizing SSC as an independent factor) is now subject to doubt.  Of course with just one board per year developing a "trend" may be difficult, but this needs to be part of folks' thinking for career planning, board prep, analyses, etc.